

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-5, 7-9, 12-15 and 17-21 are pending in the present application. Claims 1-3, 5, 7-9, 12-15 and 17-21 have been amended and Claims 6, 10, 11 and 16 have been canceled.

In the outstanding Office Action, the Abstract, specification, and Claims 7-21 were objected to because of informalities. Claims 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 19 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Watanabe et al. (U.S. 6,044,244) in view of Fujiwara et al. (U.S. 5,469,248). Claims 2, 3, 6, 9, 11-18 and 21 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim and indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form.

In response to the objection to the Abstract as containing legal phraseology, the Abstract has been amended to substitute “device” for the word “means”. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to the Abstract is respectfully requested.

In response to the objection to the disclosure, the disclosure has been amended on page 11, line 12, to change “39” to “1” as suggested in the Office Action. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to the disclosure is respectfully requested.

With regard to the objection to Claims 7 and 19 as being entirely in the form of a preamble, Claim 7 has been amended to be in the form of a method claim and Claim 19 has been amended to positively recite structure. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to these claims and dependent Claims 8, 9, 12-15, 17, 18, 20 and 21 is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 19 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Watanabe et al. in view of Fujiwara et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent Claims 1, 7 and 19 have been amended to incorporate subject matter indicated as allowable in the Office Action. Specifically, Claim 1 has been amended to include the recitation that the belt holding member is supported by a resilient member. This is the language of Claim 6 which was indicated as allowable in the Office Action. Claim 7 has been amended to include the recitation of biasing said image transfer body holding member toward said image carrier by an elastic member. This language is similar to the language of allowable Claim 11. Finally, Claim 19 has been amended to also include the recitation of each image transfer body holding member being supported by a resilient member.

Inasmuch as the subject matter indicated as allowable in the Office Action has been incorporated into each of the independent Claims 1, 7, and 19, allowance of these claims and dependent Claims 2-5, 8, 9, 12-15, 17, 18, 20 and 21 is respectfully requested.

Finally, Claims 1-3, 5, 7, 9 and 21 have been further amended to ensure that antecedent basis is provided for all terms in the claims.

Consequently, in light of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. A Notice of Allowance for Claims 1-5, 7-9, 12-15 and 17-21 is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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